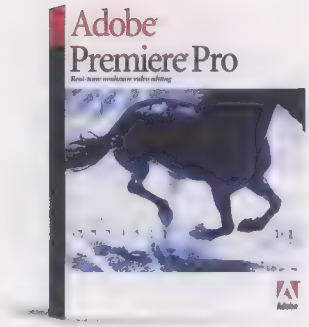
Adobe Premiere Pro

One Hard-To-Beat Video Editor



Premiere Pro
$699; $149 (upgrade)
Adobe
www.adobe.com

Premiere Pro is the latest and greatest version of Adobe's high-end nonlinear video-editing application. Pro provides improved performance over past versions and includes many new features befitting a professional editing system, bringing it up to par with such competition as Final Cut Pro and MediaStudio Pro.

New features include multiple nested timelines, three-point color correction, and improved support for sound mixing and output. The most obvious change may be the editing interface. The timeline system, in which scene transitions and other effects are cued, has moved from traditional A/B editing to single-track editing, which is generally described as more powerful but trickier to learn. You can now create multiple timelines (called Sequences) in a project and then nest them. This lets you assemble each scene with its own timeline and merge the timelines to create the full movie. As you transfer video to Pro, a new Scene Detection feature breaks scenes into clips at their natural borders. This isn't new, but it's new to Pro, and it can save you time.

There's also improved color support. The native YUV format processing retains color information from digital video input sources. Three-point color correction lets you correct for exposure and color-balance problems and even replace one color with another throughout a clip. In addition, simple white-balancing tools are available for speedy color correction by beginners; you can set the white balance by simply selecting white, black, and gray points.

Adobe Premiere Pro in action.

Video and audio tracks are now resizable, so you can view video clips and audio samples with any amount of granularity, down to single frames or samples. New audio controls include Sample-level Editing, which lets you precisely edit audio, removing "pops" as short as 1/96,000th of a second. You can also manage multichannel audio for surround sound. Pro includes 17 audio plug-ins, including Equalization and Reverb effects. In addition, Pro supports 5.1-channel surround sound mixing without the need for plug-ins or third-party software.

Support for Motion Paths (moving an object, such as text) is also improved. You can animate a clip by positioning it over another clip and setting key frames that the clip will follow. Ease In and Ease Out transitions allow for smoother timing of Motion Path effects, and you can change the clip's size, opacity, cropping, and position.

With a powerful enough PC, you can often see clips, transitions, color corrections, and so on immediately without waiting for Pro to render the images. Rendering is required to build the final output, but it's a one-shot deal. Adobe recommends a 3GHz or faster Pentium system (800MHz processor minimum).

Pro requires Windows XP Home or Pro, is optimized for Pentium systems, and includes multiprocessor and Hyper-Threading support. I tested using an Athlon XP 3000+, and Pro was still speedy. I transferred home video using a video-capture card and also imported some World War II-era ephemeral films in MPEG-2 that I downloaded from Archive.org. (The app did balk at MPEG-4 files from the same site.) After remixing a film, I burned it to a DVD-R. The process was smooth, the program was stable, and the results, while less than spectacular, could have been impressive under the control of someone with actual video-editing talent.

Pro can also import MPEG-1 and MPEG-2, AVI, QuickTime, and other common formats; export to AAF (Advanced Authoring Format), which you can then import to other apps; and burn projects directly to DVD and VCD, but it's not a DVD-authoring tool. (You'll need an app such as Adobe Encore DVD for that.)

The app is available on CD or as a 277MB download. It integrates well with Adobe's other software, letting you easily export a project to Encore DVD for authoring or import Photoshop files.

Pro isn't the best choice for beginners. More experienced users will need some transitioning to Pro, but it should definitely be worthwhile. ▲

by Kevin Savetz

For more on Premiere Pro, go to www.cpumag.com/cpudec03/premiere

CPU Ranking: 0 = Absolutely Worthless 2.5 = Absolutely Average 5 = Absolutely Perfect